

MINI DBQ

Using the following documents AND your knowledge of WWI, identify and analyze the force(s) that ultimately broke the stalemate and led to a cessation of fighting. Support your answer with the attached documents AND specific events taken from the text and class discussions.



Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, March 1918



German Ambassador Count Johann von Bernstorff to Robert Lansing, U.S. Secretary of State, January 31, 1917 (excerpt)

A new situation has thus been created which forces Germany to new decisions. Since two years and a half England is using her naval power for a criminal attempt to force Germany into submission by starvation. In brutal contempt of international law, the group of powers led by England not only curtail the legitimate trade of their opponents, but they also, by ruthless pressure, compel neutral countries either to altogether forego every trade not agreeable to the Entente Powers, or to limit it according to their arbitrary decrees.

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Thus British tyranny mercilessly increases the sufferings of the world, indifferent to the laws of humanity, indifferent to the protests of the neutrals whom they severely harm, indifferent even to the silent longing for peace among England's own allies.

Each day of the terrible struggle causes new destruction, new sufferings. Each day shortening the war will, on both sides, preserve the lives of thousands of brave soldiers and be a benefit to mankind.

The Imperial Government could not justify before its own conscience, before the German people, and before history the neglect of any means destined to bring about the end of the war. Like the President of the United States, the Imperial Government had hoped to reach this goal by negotiations.

Since the attempts to come to an understanding with the Entente Powers have been answered by the latter with the announcement of an intensified continuation of the war, the Imperial Government - in order to serve the welfare of mankind in a higher sense and not to wrong its own people - is now compelled to continue the fight for existence, again forced upon it, with the full employment of all the weapons which are at its disposal.

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Memoranda Enclosed with Count Bernstorff's Note

From February 1, 1917, sea traffic will be stopped with every available weapon and without further notice in the following blockade zones around Great Britain, France, Italy and in the Eastern Mediterranean:

Primary Documents - Karl Liebknecht's Call for Revolution, 1 November 1918

For more than four years have your oppressors used you as the tools with which to fill their pockets. More than four years have they offered your sons, fathers, brothers, as victims and have starved millions, so that they might coin profits out of your blood.

Had you won the war you would have remained helpless slaves; you are beaten. Victory is within your grasp. It lies with you to seize it.

Comrades! Soldiers! Sailors! And you workers! Arise by regiments and arise by factories. Disarm your officers, whose sympathies and ideas are those of the ruling classes. Conquer your foremen, who are on the side of the present order. Announce the fall of your masters and demonstrate your solidarity.

Do not heed the advice of the Kaiser Social Democrats. Do not let yourselves be led any longer by unworthy politicians, who play you false and deliver you into the hands of the enemy. Stand fast like many of the genuine Social Democrats in your companies and regiments. Seize the quarters of your officers; disarm them immediately. Make sure that your officers sympathize with you. In case they do so, let them lead you. Shoot them immediately in case they betray you after they have declared themselves supporters of your cause.

Soldiers and marines! Fraternize! Take possession of your ships. Overpower first your officers. Place yourselves in communication with your comrades on land and seize all harbours and open fire, if necessary, on loyal groups.

Workers in munition factories: You are the masters of the situation. Stop work immediately. From this moment on you are only making bullets which will be used against you and yours. The bullets which you now make will never reach the front.

Stop making bayonets which will be thrust into your entrails by the knights of the Government. Arise, organize, seize weapons and use them against those who plan to make slaves of you after they have made their own peace. End the war yourselves and use your weapons against the rulers.